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Re: Technical Memorandum, March 2000, Southwest Alaska Transportation Plan Regional Freight Movement Summary

I was unable to contact you by telephone today to go over referenced memorandum. Here are my inputs, however.

Page 1. Cook Inlet to Bristol Bay Corridor.
To consider this option only in conjunction with ferry service (Tustumena) is unwise, in my opinion. This project will never be economically feasible for ferry service. Tustumena would require too much dredging to achieve sufficient project depth for the vessel to enter and dock at the bulkhead with a safety margin under her keel. Tustumena would also require a more expensive bulkhead with more elaborate and costly fendering However, barge and/or landing craft operations into Williamsport will be economically feasible and area also capable of moving more cargo volume. Much less dredging and bulkhead improvements will be required.

Page 2. Table ES-2. Scenario 2
Gillnet vessel costs will be considerably more than $1,082,500 show in the savings ("avoided costs") column, On page 50 is shown the derivation of this $1,082,500 figure. Three days were used for sailing the 1100 nautical miles from Bristol Bay (Naknek) via False Pass to Homer. Five or six days is more likely. A typical 32' gillnetter running from Bristol Bay would average only about 11 knots per hour while underway, would require frequent stops to refuel at intermediate ports, and would incur delays "waiting weather" that would slow it down while waiting in protected bays, etc for weather to moderate. This $1,082,500 figure should be increased because of the additional 2 to 3 days required for each gillnetter for the voyage.

Page 6. Cook Inlet to Bristol Bay Corridor.
The statement "All options are provided in conjunction with ferry service from Homer to Williamsport" weakens the analysis. More savings are available via the use of barges and landing craft because of greater capacity for cargo movement per vessel trip, lower costs to be amortized for the lesser dredging and bulkhead improvement requirements, etc. The "ferry service option" is not valid because it is not practical for cargo transport Homer to Williamsport.

Page 8, 4* 'bullet" from top.
It is apparent from this statement as well as from some others in this technical memo, that Totem Ocean Trailer Express' (TOTE's) proposed new "'Far East" service has not been considered. TOTE will likely place 2 of their 3 older RO/RO ships on the following route in 2003 after they are replaced by TOTE's new

ships in the Tacoma to Anchorage trade.

TOTE Far East Service:

Tacoma - Cook Inlet Port (likely Homer as Anchorage will be too congested) ⇨ Dutch Harbor - Adak ⇨ Russian Far East Ports - Japan ⇨ Tacoma.

This will enable shipping the standard size containers in the container ship/container barge trade (20's, 24's, 40's, and 45's – not the "specialized SeaLand" 35' box used in this technical memo analysis) northbound from Tacoma to Homer, where they can be staged for transhipment by barge and/or large landing craft to a dredged, improved Williamsport where the bulkhead would be accessible to these shallow draft cargo vessels on every high tide, not just the month's extreme highs.

Page 22, AMHS Freight Transport

As mentioned in several places above, Tustumena cargo service Homer to Williamsport will not be economically feasible; barge or large landing craft service will be.

Page 36, top of page.

Williamsport would have to be dredged only to the extent to enable regular, shallow-draft barge/landing craft service. This is way below the dredging requirements for service by Tustumena. This minimal, lower cost dredging would enable regular/daily barge service into Williamsport or every high tide not just the extreme highs.

Page 41. Re "35 foot van".

The 35' container was a specialized/SeaLand container and was never standard in the industry. Standard now, even for SeaLand (which has switched) are the 40' and 45' containers, also the 20's. The analysis on this page will show less total cargo costs if reanalyzed using 40 or 45' containers on chassis because more cargo can be moved in fewer trips in the longer boxes.

Briefing at the meeting.

I believe one of the presenters at last week's meeting indicated a bridge is planned to span the Naknek River connecting Naknek to south Naknek. Such a bridge would be prohibitively expensive if designed with a high enough clearance from high water (extreme high tide) to bottom of bridge span to permit the normal container barge to come under the bridge and land at Naknek City Dock. A barge with 12' freeboard and containers stacked 4 high would need 50' clearance (12'+4x8'+6' safety margin). When I was with Crowley in the early 90's, we regularly took container barge into Naknek dock with containers 4 high, occasionally 5 high. A "ferry service" in summer and/or hovercraft service year round would be a much lower cost alternative to connect Naknek with South Naknek.

If you want to discuss the above comments, please contact me. 1 thought the information might be useful to you.

Sincerely,

CITY OF HOMER

Bill Abbott
Port Director/Harbormaster

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